Don’t be afraid to speak your truth…

We live in a world composed of laws that were written by human-kind. These codes of conduct and operational guidelines differ from one country, or one culture, to the next. In the United States of America, we abide by the laws that were written to benefit the Anglo-European majority that entrenched itself within a land already occupied by other nations.

Unfortunately, these colonizers chose to bring religions of hatred and bigotry along with their lust for mineral wealth; they also feared the native peoples who were already living on the land they encroached. Other than warfare, once the indigenous communities learned how to use the invaders’ laws against them, these settlers began passing legislation that created a national indoctrination of racist, indifferent Christianity, albeit unorganized in any single approach.

It is important to accept and realize this as the truth. Anglo-European American citizens have gained an advantage from being a part a majority hellbent on maintaining the seat of power, regardless of how it affects any other demographic. I too was a beneficiary of this societal class thanks to my multiracial makeup being more heavily weighted towards white America. Therefore, it is my obligation as one of the people to use the privilege I had to give back to the community. I do this by offering my knowledge and preserving the culture for future generations to enjoy.

The reason I decided to explain so much of this was to detail what happened to me recently in a US court of law, and to empower you, the reader, with the knowledge that you can and should not let society dictate who you are.

Below is a letter written to the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct related to the behavior of an attorney while in a family court of law. I testified as to my spirituality and my position as a Lakȟól Wóčhekiye Huŋkáyapi (Lakota spiritual leader)—the court was educated as to the validity of the Lakota spirituality and cultural identity, deemed so by Congress and the US Supreme Court—and the court was shown that skin color doesn't determine a person's identity, that our spirituality and culture are to be respected as is any other religious/cultural identity, and that we are still here.

Hopefully this attorney will be held accountable for her behavior and, perhaps, the State of Texas will finally stand up for a culture that is so adored and revered by the Anglo-European colonizers, even though they are petrified to hear their own truth and engage our communities.

Either way, I spoke my truth under oath to a US Court as to my culture, my spirituality, and the social issues that have prevented Native American people from gaining the same exposure as the Christian and Anglo institutions of the USA. I wanted to share this letter so that anyone afraid to be themselves and engage their cultural/spiritual identity will know that they SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID to be who they are.

This is a democracy, meaning YOU MUST VOTE and MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD in order to keep our democracy alive. Don't let bigots and racists control the United States of America. We, as a people, have the power to remove the radicals that control our lives and present the TRUTH in ways that must be heard and seen.

I will always carry my Čhaŋnúŋpa (sacred pipe) and wear my medallions with pride. I will always offer my pipe to those who ask for it's healing and spiritual gifts. I will never allow society to determine my purpose or identity. You should not be afraid to be who you really are.

Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ (all my relations)

Letter Below

State Commission on Judicial Conduct
PO Box 12265
Austin, Texas 78711-2265
512-463-5533

Lubbock Area Bar Association
P.O. Box 109
Lubbock, TX, 79401
806-775-1668

ACLU
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York NY 10004
212-549-2500

To the State Commission on Judicial Conduct and the Lubbock Area Bar Association,

My name is Dr. Blackhorse, or Súŋkawakȟaŋ Sápa, and I was recently testifying at the Lubbock County Court At Law [redacted] in my capacity as a Spiritual/Religious Counselor. I am specifically writing this letter to you today to express concerns directly related to attorney [redacted], partner in [redacted] Law Firm, and her demeanor in court.

In court, I testified, under oath, as to the credibility of my Lakȟóta spirituality (a Native American cultural identity and religion recognized by the Congress & Supreme Court of the US), providing a fact-based testimony as to my cultural traditions/knowledge and their applications towards mental and physical well-being in the exact same context as would a priest, pastor, rabbi, or any other spiritual/religious leader in any other organized Christian, Jewish, or otherwise, religion.

The judge allowed me to demonstrate the significance of the sacred pipe, or Čhaŋnúŋpa, to the court as a demonstrative, in which I specifically stated the incredible significance and power that the pipe represents to my culture and spirituality, the same as a Crucifix, or a Star of David may be viewed in the Christian and Jewish communities respectively. I was also allowed to explain the significance of the Ínipi ceremony, or purification sweat lodge, which is the equivalent of attending a Catholic confessional, participating in a Church or Synagogue service, or attending a religious retreat, respectfully.

I am fully aware that my culture may seem different and unfamiliar to the Court, however, attorney [redacted] ignored decorum in the courtroom and veered into bigotry, ignorance, and ultimately hate speech.

Once established that my culture and spirituality were indeed genuine, I expected her to treat the culture with dignity and respect; I assumed she would honor the reverence of my position, like any other spiritual/religious counselor, while also probing my credibility as a witness during cross-examination. Instead, she chose to do the following: 1) mispronounce my name repeatedly as "Mr. Black Heart" although corrected multiple times, 2) reference my profession as a "so called Spiritual Counselor," 3) accuse my culture of using illicit substances in our most sacred instrument, 4) use exaggerated hand gestures such as waving her hands frivolously to ridicule my culture, pointing to the ceiling in dismissal of my language, swatting towards me as if trying to repel me, and resting her head in boredom when referencing my culture, 5) refusing to address me by my name when invoking my testimony throughout the remainder of the court hearing, instead pointing and gesturing aggressively, using the terms "that guy" or "this man" and finally 6) in her closing argument, Ms. [redacted] chose to invoke hate speech and ridiculed the sacred pipe as being "some pipe and feather thing" while she continued her obscene hand gestures with a bounce in her step. This would be the equivalent, for example, of ridiculing and dismissing, not only the spiritual/religious leaders, but also the most sacred objects of any culture, i.e. crucifix, rosary, casket, clothing, etc.

These actions were direct attacks on my culture and on me, so I chose to leave the courtroom in the middle of her closing to avoid any more cruelty after her last, hateful comment. It is my belief had I been, for example, a Catholic Priest, that Ms. [redacted] would not have spoken with such animosity and bigotry towards me or about the spirituality. I only wished the judge had corrected Ms. [redacted] on her abhorrent behavior, especially since it was repeatedly noticed by members of the public watching in the gallery.

I do appreciate the Court allowing me to testify and demonstrate to the public a culture of ancient knowledge & wisdom that is native to these lands, an integral part of our collective humanity, and still present to this day. Too many times our people have been persecuted and removed from the public forum, simply because we are Native American and misunderstood. It is the fault of Ms. [redacted]'s repeated attempts to assault

my culture, appealing to outdated racial epithets when she could not discredit my testimony, that led to this disgusting display of bigotry in a family court of law. She had no reason to invoke such barbaric behavior, other than to personally attack my culture and traditions.

Lastly, I ask the State of Texas to please address the concerns that I have laid before you regarding attorney at law [redacted]. The transcript from trial will textually verify all the allegations I have brought forward in this letter.

I ask the Texas State Bar to assure me that my concerns be taken seriously and that Ms. [redacted] be reprimanded in a manner deemed just and right by the State of Texas on behalf of the public. I also ask that Ms. [redacted] issue a public letter of apology to the "Native American Communities of the United States and Texas" for her unnecessary, unsavory, and inhuman behavior in a public forum of law.

This letter has been copied to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for accountability. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

All My Relations (Mitákuye Oyás'iŋ),

Linthicum-Blackhorse, DMA
Lakȟól Wóčhekiye Spiritual Leader
LinthicumBlackhorse@gmail.com